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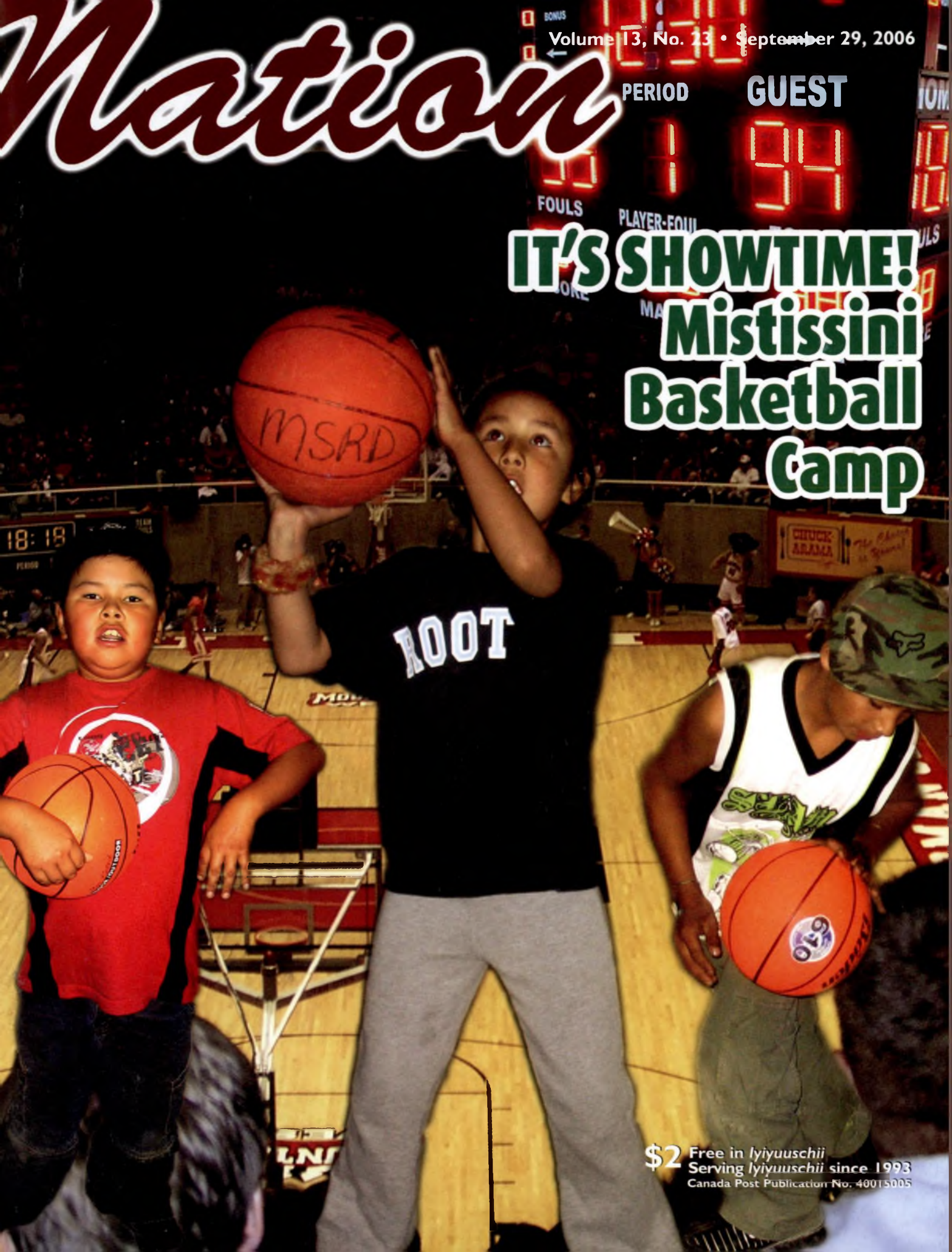

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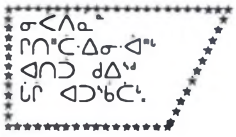

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editorial

When the music's over...

by Lyle Stewart

It's now been a year since Matthew Mukash was elected Grand Chief of the Crees in a decisive vote, sweeping Ted Moses from office after a narrow defeat three years previously to the good doctor.

At *the Nation*, we were optimistic. After a number of years in which we felt the Crees were governed by a secretive and autocratic regime, a man who ran on a platform of transparency in government now held the reigns of power. For democracy and the health of the Cree Nation (not to mention Cree journalism), it was reason to celebrate. Let the good times roll.

Well, let's just say that we stopped dancing a while ago. It's not that we have gotten tired of the music, or don't like his tunes, it's that we aren't hearing much at all out of the Grand Council. It's almost as if Matthew Mukash has hung up his famous fiddle.

Before the election, he was always available for a quick quote or an interview. Since winning power, messages requesting comment on a variety of issues affecting the Crees pile up on his communications assistant's voice mail.

A traditional request for an annual "state of the nation" interview with the Grand Chief was met with a demand for a written set of questions. Then it was months before a written set of answers (we're not even certain Mukash wrote them) was returned to us.

Other huge stories pass without any reaction from the Grand Council. When the chiefs of three Cree communities recently announced their intention to fight the EM 1-A project, it would have been informative to hear where the Cree leadership stood on the issue. Instead, silence. Pure, deafening silence.

Mukash hasn't been completely mute. He will sometimes return the calls of certain big media down south. But for Cree media? Don't bother waiting up for a phone call.

When Mukash met with Premier Jean Charest in August this past summer, we tried our best to inform the Cree on what was discussed. Apparently the Grand Council wasn't ready for readers to know the substance of those talks, because no one would return our calls.

Unlike other media-phobic politicians, with Mukash it's not so much a matter of controlling the message as the fact that there is precious little message to begin with.

The Grand Council has issued eight press releases over the past year, already a low number. But only half of them had much news value. Communiques that congratulate Phil Fontaine on his re-election as AFN National Chief or go out on a limb to express support for the UN draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples don't quite make us shout, "Stop the presses!"

We don't think Mukash is hiding a huge whopper from the Cree people on the scale of a "Paix des Braves" pact. But we do have difficulty getting a sense of his political priorities. Where is the Grand Council going, exactly?

We do give Mukash credit for touring the Cree communities to consult with local leadership... even if these meetings were all too depressingly unannounced. We also understand that Matthew Mukash suffered from a tough illness this past year that put him in hospital for a while. That is bound to slow things down.

None of that counters the overall impression of drift we get from his administration, though.

It's almost as if Matthew Mukash is wary of alienating the part of the electorate that brought him to power because they might have believed he could turn the clock back to before the Paix des Braves.

The Grand Chief has three years left in his mandate, enough time to show leadership. But he needs to do it openly, transparently, and he needs to do it now.

Matthew Mukash should dust off that fiddle and get us dancing once again.

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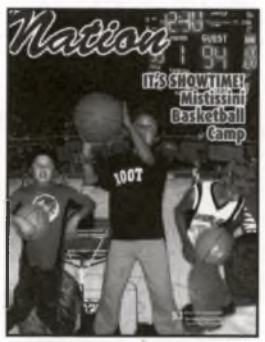

on the cover

Photo: Steve Bonspiel

Design: Alexandre Costa

rez notes

The ups and downs of Cree TV

The latest buzz around is the CREETV concept. Yep, Crees on the boob tube. It used to be just about everyone's dream to be on TV, with Canadian Idol and all that, but just imagine what could be done with CREETV.

Bingos, if aired on TV, would be a big boost to those who are hard of hearing, or just can't keep up with the barrage of numbers (I consider myself to be some sort of mathematical genius, but when it comes to playing bingo, my brain goes gaga) and you just can't cheat with that visually aided system. Another good show would be the Edge of Lightness, where everyone is scheming to be good, instead of the other way around, where everyone has something up their sleeves and are up to do some nasty deeds, but not CREETV's surreal outlook in life where everyone's the good guy and no one stays up late at night (yeah, right).

One show I would dread is the one where all the traditional hunting secrets are released to the unknowing world and having a show where all the good fishing spots are revealed would be a bit unnerving. Like whose going to find out that I use shrimp to catch the big ones anyway? Come on, some trade secrets should stay away from the limelight and glow of the little screen.

A good show would be for those who have a hard time understanding why things are done the way they are. Mysteries of how porcupine quills are removed, or how to get that goose call down to perfection would be nice. A good cooking show would end the debate once and for all about the recipe for bannock and explain why washing hands before you knead the dough (this could be a slogan for the CBHSSJB, wash, wash, and wash) is considered important.

A sports show for those who just can't get enough on the NHL or tournaments would be ideal for replay all summer. A blooper show would probably have endless material from local and regional meetings; in fact, nearly everything we do could be used as material for some show or another. One show I would love would be the court show, where neighborhood antics would be revealed in critical detail.

With all this coming, a new wave of groupie would be spawned, one wired or unwired to a single thought, ratings and celibacy (I mean celebrities) would be around every corner from Abitibi-Temiscamingue to the Hudson Bay. Further north, the paparazzi would have to chase after stretch ATVs and snowmobiles and hope that their camera batteries last more than a few minutes at -30 degrees.

Who would pay for all this? Commercials, of course. Klik anyone? How about a pot of Labrador tea? Woodchoppers and home pizza enterprises would vie for the 11:30 am slot just before lunch, urging everyone to take-out or buy a cord of wood for the winter. Even soap operas using real people with real problems could probably become reality soap culture. Everything including the dirty laundry could be reeled out in real time. This of course, could only work if everyone in the neighborhood was crazy and ready to succumb into a coma or have some life-threatening illness stretch out for years, creating yet another reason to go plasma screen manic. As for me, I still think Betamax was the best!

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Canada

Cree trappers look to a diminished future

by Steve Bonspiel

The Cree Trapper's and Hydro-Québec Conference, held in Val d'Or Sept. 14-16, was set up to get the trappers talking. The question is, was anyone listening?

"It's a way the trappers can network together and see what they got out of their individual meetings with hydro," said Glen Cooper, the Cree Regional Authority Representative for the Boumhounan Committee.

"When we met with trappers, they requested a gathering of all the trappers who would be and have been affected by Hydro development. So it was on us as the Boumhounan representatives to request to Hydro to plan this with them. We wanted to take a different approach and get the trappers meeting together and have Hydro-Québec on hand to answer any technical or specific questions."

Day one was about the past hydroelectric project – La Grande. Day two saw the meeting focus on the present – Eastmain 1. Day three spoke of the unknown and yet-to-be approved project – EM 1A.

Many Crees, especially trappers, have divided opinions on the proposed EM 1A project. Some are afraid of the damage to the fish by mercury or the turbines; others are wary of losing their harvesting areas or the better part of their trapline. Some, however, have welcomed the project with open arms and recognize the economic benefits that can come with it.

"The way it's working at EM 1, it's going to flow these rivers into LG 2," said David Pepabano, a tallyman and outfitter. "All the water's going there. In my trapline, the water will go higher. I have a fishing camp at Lake Wawa. If it floods, the fish will go over the rapids and flow into the reservoir. I'd lose all my fish and my camp. Americans go there to fish and this summer they told me to save it and not to let anyone destroy it."

Paul Dixon

> **"I'd lose all my fish and my camp. Americans go there to fish and this summer they told me to save it and not to let anyone destroy it"**

Although Pepabano was upset, he agreed with the intent of the diversions, past and present.

When asked how he voted in 2002 for the Paix des Braves, Pepabano said he supported every part of it. "Yes, I'm with Hydro, I agree with everything they said. It's for our own good. They want to give us jobs because of that. Nobody will survive trapping anymore. It's finished," he said.

During a break in the meeting, however, Pepabano tried to convince a Hydro-Québec representative to come fishing with him in a few years' time, when the project will be in full swing. The HQ rep agreed, albeit with a smile that seemed to suggest otherwise.

"If it's flooded I won't have anything to survive on. Hydro's not going to hire a 60-year-old man. What can I do? Nobody will come to fish anymore."

When he was asked where he would go if that happened? "Maybe to heaven, I'll be starving because there will be no more fish to eat."

In all, over 200 people attended, including 162 trappers.

Matthew Wapachee told *the Nation* about the beaver relocation project he helped facilitate over the course of two summers during the construction of EM 1.

"First we do an inventory from the potentially impacted area, we do a beaver survey." said Wapachee of the beaver relocation project that was contracted out by the Société de l'Energie de la Baie James.

"Once we've identified the beaver lodges in the impoundment site, we have these large cage traps that we set and catch them," said Wapachee, who added that this was done with the help of wildlife officials.

"We do this by helicopter. Then we stage them in the same lake in an 8 by 8 cage. Part of it is in the water, the other part on dry land. We keep them there until we think we have all the beavers from that lodge. Then we move them by helicopter as a family to a different location and release them together."

The project was a success.

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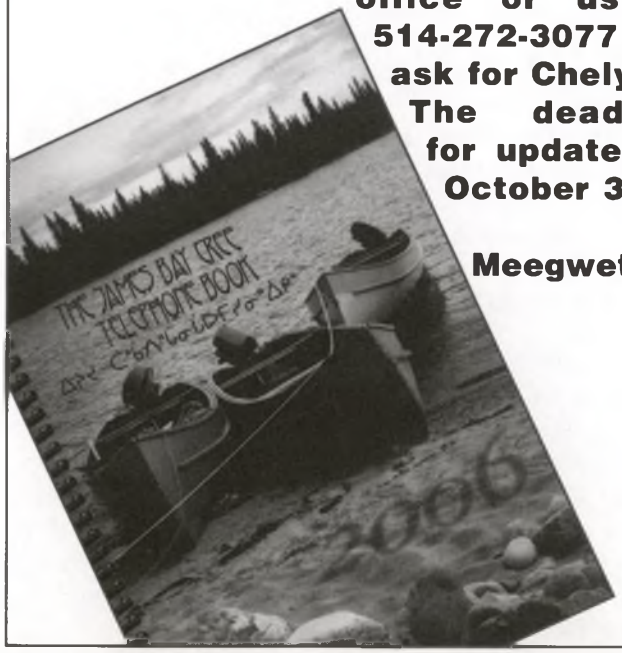

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Val-d'Or, Quebec J9P 1S5
Phone: (819) 824-9888
Fax: (819) 824-9588
hester.rodney@cablevision.qc.ca

"Thanking you in advance for your application, and for demonstrating your willingness to increase the tourist activity within Eeyou Istchee."

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"I relocated about 40 beaver like that. That was three years ago. We monitored them for one year with equipment we installed on their tail. We were able to locate where they stayed for the winter. After one year we lost a few, I'd say it was an 80 per cent success rate," said Wapachee.

"The monitoring device works sort of like a GPS. It was a transmitter that gave out a signal up to one kilometre. You could follow the signal to within 50 feet of where the beaver were," he said.

"They were moved to areas that had a high occupancy rate in the past but over the years had declined. So we re-stocked those areas, which were basically three different lakes within my territory. They would have drowned in the EM 1 reservoir if we didn't do that."

He also said that just before the impoundment, he and his family trapped the remaining beaver.

"I'm one of the impacted tallymen of the EM 1 project," he said. "I'm probably the only impacted tallyman from Nemaska affected by the impoundment of the Eastmain River. They wanted me to come and share the experience I've had with this past project.

"It's hard to put a finger on exactly how I feel. Yeah I lost big time, but there is a positive side to it too"

"It's been almost a year since the impoundment and 10 per cent of my trapline has been flooded," Wapachee said, somberly.

"Mentally you tend to think about what you've lost," he continued. "The cultural harvesting activities and the memories; the things you used to do with your family and your land users on the Eastmain River... those things come back to you quite a bit after one year. Especially with the impoundment and all I see is a big body of water over a harvesting territory that I was accustomed to going to every fall and spring. It was a very prime harvesting territory for moose and goose, for everything."

This conference was a good opportunity for trappers to air their concerns, he said.

"I'm just glad that the trappers have an opportunity to participate and learn from experiences, especially from land users that were impacted by past projects," he said.

Ironically, an open discussion that was supposed to be held on day one concerning past projects and to air Cree concerns was cancelled due to lack of time.

"It was misleading, the invitation," said Paul Dixon, who was representing his family's trapline at Windy Lake and the Senneterre Cree traplines near Waswanipi. "It said that Hydro would be there. They weren't. Only the Cree people were there while Hydro was sitting in the hallway."

He felt deceived. "If they told me it would be like this, I wouldn't have come," said Dixon, who was upset at the cancellation of the open discussion period.

Rodney hester chats with Matthew Wapachee

"Hydro made a couple of presentations by DVD, which to some were amazing. But I found them very depressing. I don't agree to the diversion of the river. I belong to a hunting society and I'd be stupid to agree to it. The trappers are bearing the cost of all this."

"It's supposed to be a new relationship, but they're not around. I can't believe it. I wish people would take us seriously and listen to us. I feel like no one is actually listening here."

Wapachee sees it differently. This agreement was a good thing, he says, despite the hardships it has imposed on his trapline and the decline in his family's annual harvest.

"I really have mixed feelings about it. I see both good and bad. It's hard to put a finger on exactly how I feel. Yeah I lost big time, but there is a positive side to it too," he said.

"After the signing of the Paix des Braves, I see in my community funding that comes on an annual basis and there are many projects that are implemented and completed. It's supposed to continue like that," said Wapachee.

"In general I lost as a tallyman and my land users were greatly impacted. I lost a lot of land and prime harvesting territory. But the public is benefiting from our loss. I lost, but I think I can adapt," he said.

David Pepabano invites Hydro rep to go fishing on his trapline

"It's been almost a year since the impoundment and 10% of my trapline has been flooded"

Peter Paul goes over the details with Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff

CREE TV?

by Steve Bonspiel

Group studies feasibility of Cree television stations

As the Cree Nation has grown over the past 40 years, so has the Cree communications infrastructure – radio stations, magazines and newspapers. Now Eeyou Istchee could also see the addition of one or more Cree television stations.

"We're going to look at it closely, it could be a year or two years," said Rodney Hester, Economic Agent for the Cree Secretariat in Val d'Or and one of the members on a board designed to look into the feasibility of the project. Other board members include representatives from the Grand Council.

"It all depends on what we come up with in our research and development phase of the project. We can't put a time on it right now, but the sooner, the better," said Hester, who recently met with Mohawks from Kahnawake to discuss the success they've had with their television station. They also visited the facility.

"This will create jobs, generate revenue and long-term meaningful employment for the Crees," said Hester. It will open up a new industry with telecommunications and change the way we communicate, the way we do business and build upon what we've done, what we've accomplished so far, and take it to the next level."

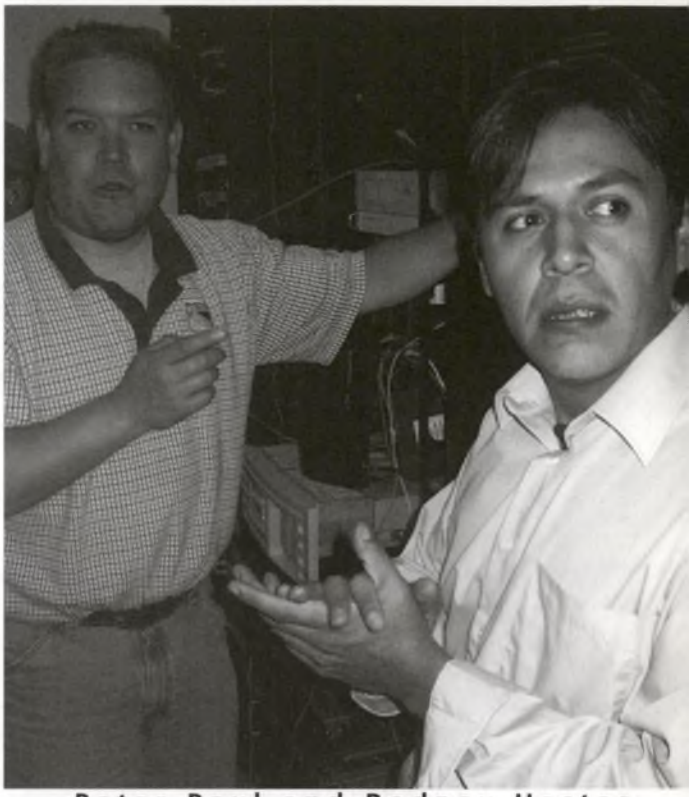
Hester said that the hopes are to have cultural, educational and language programs and said that the only boundaries are their imaginations.

"It's long overdue," said Hester. "The need and the audience are there. The interest is there. There's every reason why we should go with it. It's time."

Peter Paul, who owns the television station which is complimented by a local cable service, available to the 8,000 Mohawks of Kahnawake, said that despite the cost, the benefits are enormous.

"It's changed the dynamics of the community in terms of information," said Paul. "You can literally have 24-7 access into houses, almost instantaneous. You don't have to wait for a newspaper to be printed on a weekly basis. You don't have to listen to radio during a certain time slot. It's changed the dynamics for media in the community."

His station cost "millions" to start up and operate, something which the Grand Council will find out as they do more research.



Peter Paul and Rodney Hester

"The rough cost from one pole to another is $1,500, if you want a very quick calculation," he said. "That's for infrastructure. To build on the reserve, it depends 100 per cent on how many streets and telephone poles they have. Then it depends on how many channels they want to offer. It's probably safe to say that each community's head end will be minimum $100,000 to $150,000.

"We plan to do community consultations and take note of inventory, human resources, facilities and equipment. We want everyone to feel involved"

"If Waswanipi wants 100 channels and Chisasibi only wants 25 channels, there's a major price difference in terms of that head end equipment you need," Paul speculated.

"Their objective should be to capitalize and use it to its fullest advantage, meaning language and culture," added Paul, who cautioned against using it for too much band propaganda. Even as a Chief, he does not allow too much politics

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Results of the 1st Cree Traditional Karate Championship

White Belt Jr. Individual Kata/Kumite
Tia Matoush
Odile St-Louis
James Cloutier

White Belt Jr. Team Kata (Girls)
Tia Matoush, Mary Anna Matoush and Lena Wadden (Wemindji)
Kyana Ottereyes, Alyssa Ottereyes and Joni Wadden (Waswanipi)
Angel Louttit, Michel Louttit and Daisy Angatukaluk (Whapmagoostui)

White Belt Jr. Team Kata (Boys)
James Cloutier, Marcus Moses and Roxanne Chalifoux (Waskaganish)
Vernon Kawapit, Byron Dick and Malcolm Cain (Whapmagoostui)

White Belt Women Individual Kata/Kumite
Annie Boisselle (Montréal)
April Gull (Wemindji)
Delores Gilpin-Mark (Wemindji)
Marjorie Asquabaneskum (Wemindji)

White Belt Men Individual Kata/Kumite
Albert Steven
Azzedine Ben Abdelessam
Glen Asquabaneskum
Jeremy Matches

Coloured Belt Jr. Individual Kata/Kumite (Boys)
Omar Almounayer
Mohand Ben Abdelessam
Patrick Loon

Coloured Belt Women Individual Kata/Kumite
Marie-Ève Lemieux
Stéphanie Grimard

Coloured Belt Men Individual Kata/Kumite
Willie Loon
Daryus Longtin
Azzedine

continued from page 8

on air and in the recent band council elections, he chose not to run his own advertisement to entice the people to vote for him.

Hester said that all of these questions and more will be examined closely and he doesn't rule out a return to Kahnawake in the future.

"It's a Cree project and they will decide on this project," he said. "We plan to do community consultations and take note of inventory, human resources, facilities and equipment. We want everyone to feel involved. That's the way we'll communicate it to our people. It's important and it's time to get into this industry."

Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff and Youth Grand Chief and Mistissini Councillor John Matoush were also on hand. Matoush intimated that Cree TV becoming a reality is just a matter of time.

"There's a high unemployment rate in the Cree Nation," he said. "I was thinking of the fact that 65 per cent of Cree youth are under the age of 30. These are things we're trying to tackle and provide long-term employment rather than on a seasonal basis. Things that will be there in the long run, this can assist in terms of employment," said Matoush, who added that a project like Cree TV will get the youth excited and motivated in ways they have not been before.

Matoush said that the Grand Council has been studying similar projects in Nunavut and New Zealand. If it can work in those places, it's a shoe-in for Eeyou Istchee, he said.

"For sure we'll need a lot of youth because they grasp the modern technology that is in the communities now," Matoush continued.

"They understand and are able to play with the technology. So I think the need will be to get them trained and get them to understand more of it so they can be a big part of the project."

Mistissini Basketball Camp a slam dunk

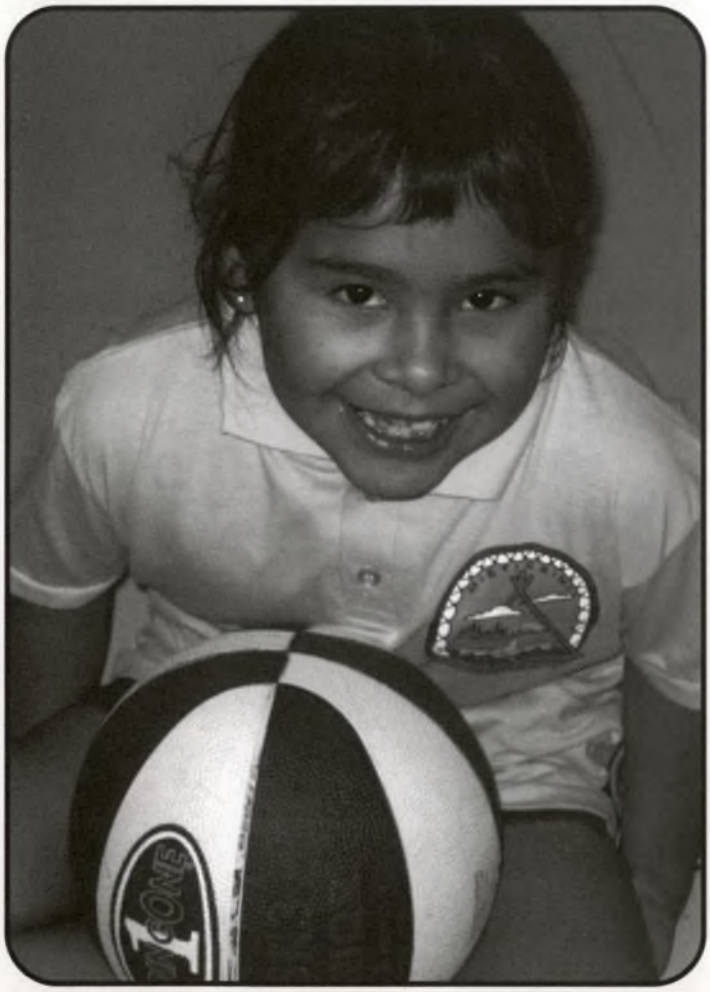
feature

by Steve Bonspiel

Toronto Raptors put on a clinic for the sport and to promote literacy

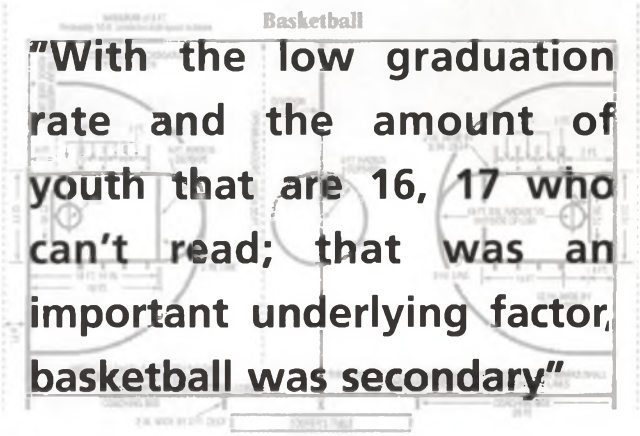
Literacy is a key component in the development of a child. Without it, kids feel left out, unable to communicate in an age in which newspapers and online blogs rule. Mistissini's 2006 Basketball Camp was set up to attack the large problem of illiteracy at the grassroots level in Eeyou Istchee.

"It started with an idea about two years ago," said Gordon Hudson, Mistissini's Director of Youth Healing Services. "I saw the popularity of basketball and I made a phone call to then-General Manager Rob Babcock. We started the process. We had a group of youth go down to Toronto to attend a couple games last year and we had a tour of the Air Canada Centre."



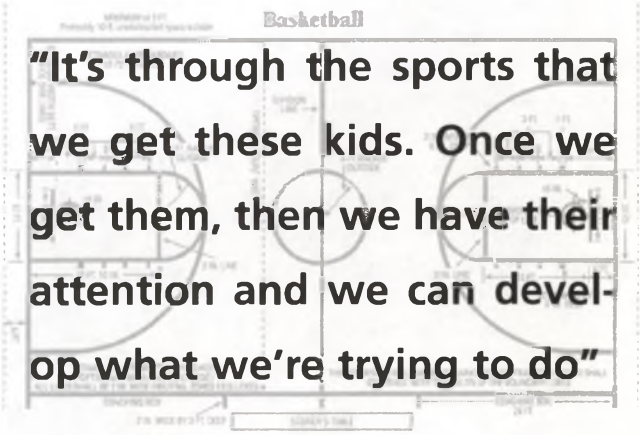
Then on September 8 and 9, a Raptors group that included players Fred Jones and PJ Tucker headed to Mistissini to see for themselves what these kids were about – in their own element.

"I'm elated with the response that took place," said Hudson.


Basketball
"With the low graduation rate and the amount of youth that are 16, 17 who can't read; that was an important underlying factor, basketball was secondary"

"Any activity we do is always about the underlying theme. For the football camp it's about self-esteem. About asking for help and accomplishing your goals," he said. "With the basketball camp, it's literacy. With the low graduation rate and the amount of youth that are 16, 17 who can't read; that was an important underlying factor, basketball was secondary.

"It's through the sports that we get these kids. Once we get


Basketball
"It's through the sports that we get these kids. Once we get them, then we have their attention and we can develop what we're trying to do"

them, then we have their attention and we can develop what we're trying to do."

Jeff Spencer

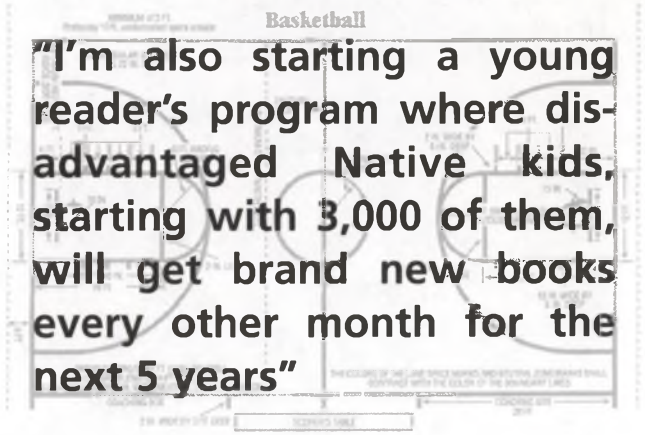
The first day was chopped into two main reading sessions. The first group was the elementary school children. Ontario's Lieutenant Governor, James Bartleman, who is Aboriginal, read to the kids along with the two Raptors' players.

Then the high school kids came in and the message was a little more hard-hitting.

Bartleman talked about the opportunities life presents and how it is up to each student to take hold of them and make the best of what they are given. Chief John Longchap thanked the Raptors for visiting his community and praised Bartleman for his numerous endeavours in bettering the lives of young Aboriginals.

Bartleman's message to the kids demonstrated that his upbringing had its share of difficulty too. He talked about living in a trailer in a small Ontario town and not being accepted by the white society or the Aboriginal society.

"I was very fortunate that despite coming from a family

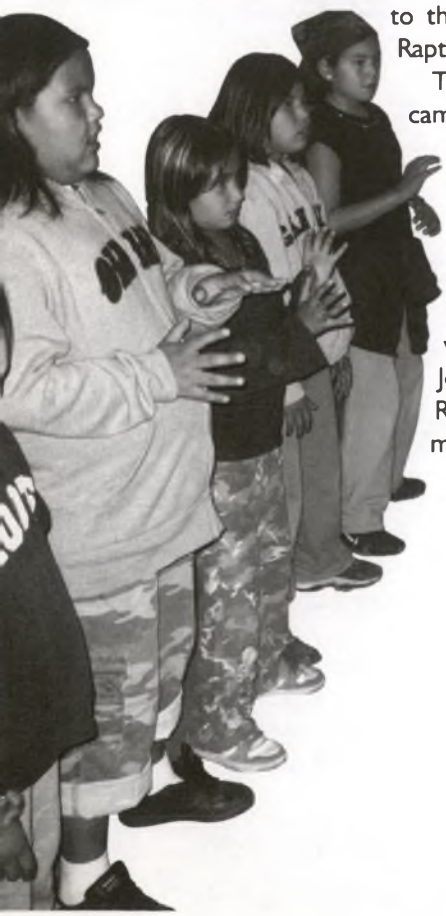

Basketball
"I'm also starting a young reader's program where disadvantaged Native kids, starting with 3,000 of them, will get brand new books every other month for the next 5 years"

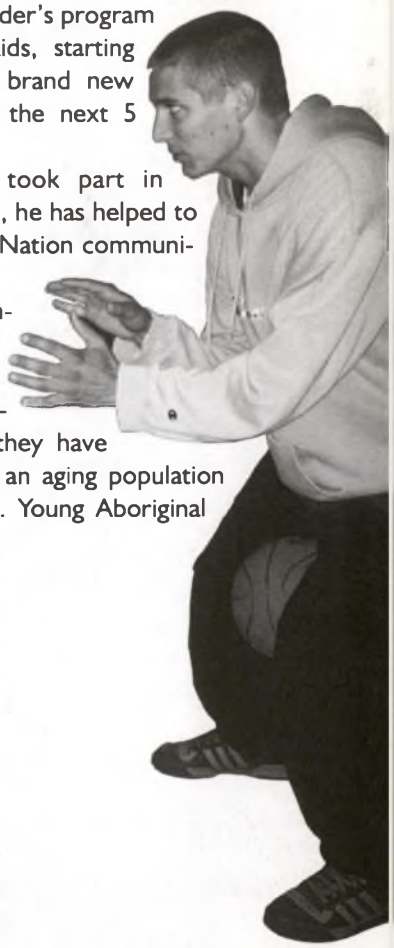
where my mother and father only had a Grade 3 or 4 education, they were both avid readers. They didn't allow poverty to stop them from reading or visiting the library. I followed their example and learned to read early in life. That gave me a leg up in terms of doing well in school and going on to university," said Bartleman, who runs 35 literacy camps in Ontario and is hoping to start one in Eeyou Istchee next summer.

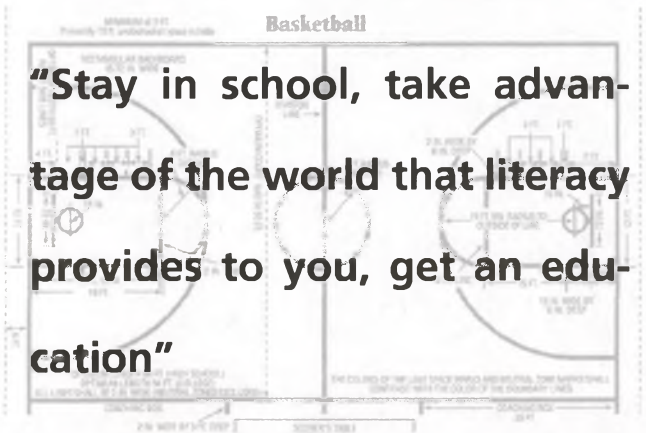
"I'm also starting a young reader's program where disadvantaged Native kids, starting with 3,000 of them, will get brand new books every other month for the next 5 years."

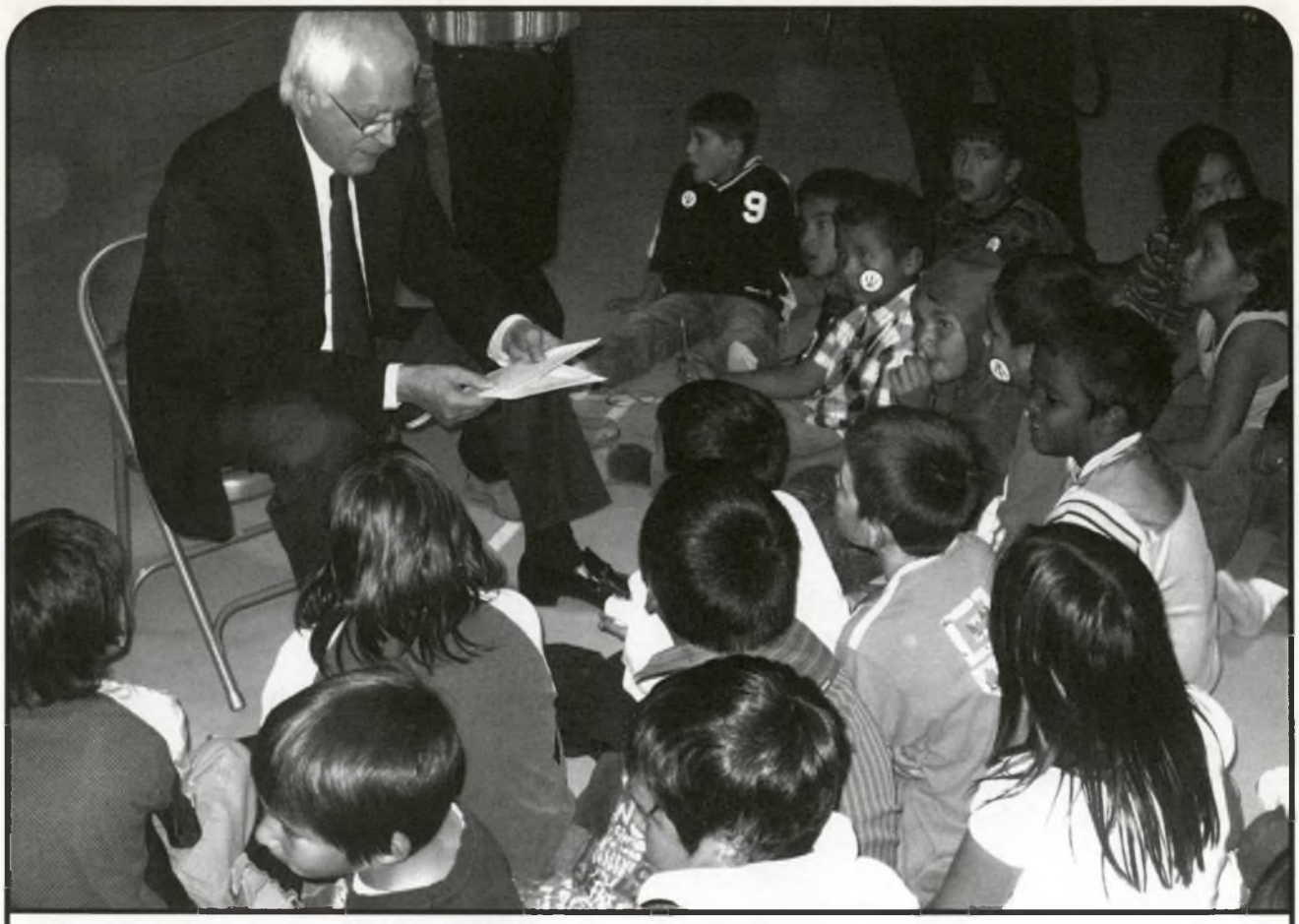
Last summer, 1,750 kids took part in Bartleman's literacy camps. In all, he has helped to provide 850,000 books to First Nation communities and friendship centres.

"Stay in school, take advantage of the world that literacy provides to you, get an education," he reiterated. "The opportunities are there for you as they have never been because we live in an aging population that needs workers of all sorts. Young Aboriginal







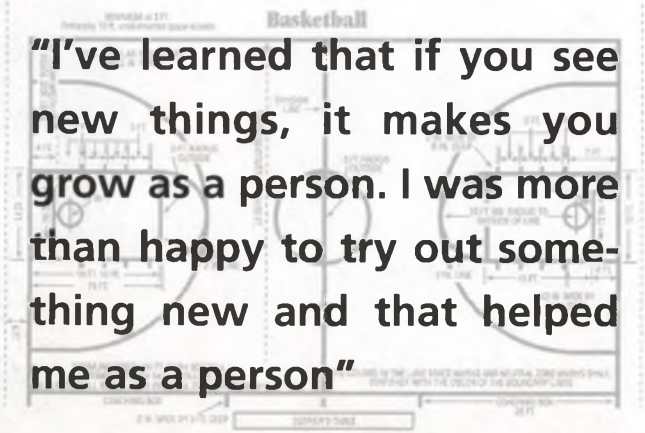


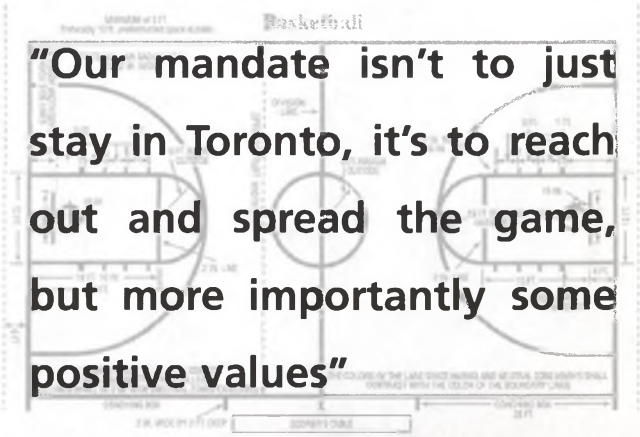
Ontario Lieutenant Governor James Bartleman reads to the kids

have opportunities in front of them and in the final analysis, it's up to them to make that decision."

The Raptors' players, who themselves hail from underprivileged areas, were overwhelmed by the love and support shown to them by the community.

"It's an experience, something that I haven't seen before," said Fred Jones, a guard who signed as a free agent with Toronto this year. "There are poverty-stricken areas all over, like from where I'm from and with different ethnic groups. It's good to be here and to see the kids in this situation and still seem like they have some life in them and that they want people to focus on them and give them encouragement so they can push on and work out."


Basketball
"I've learned that if you see new things, it makes you grow as a person. I was more than happy to try out something new and that helped me as a person"


Basketball
"Our mandate isn't to just stay in Toronto, it's to reach out and spread the game, but more importantly some positive values"

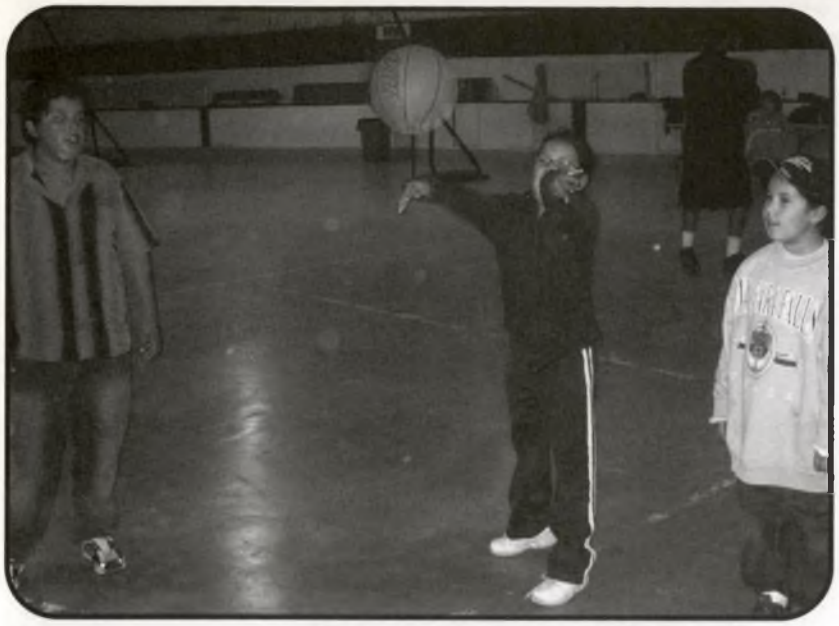
Jones said he probably took just as much from the camp as the kids did.

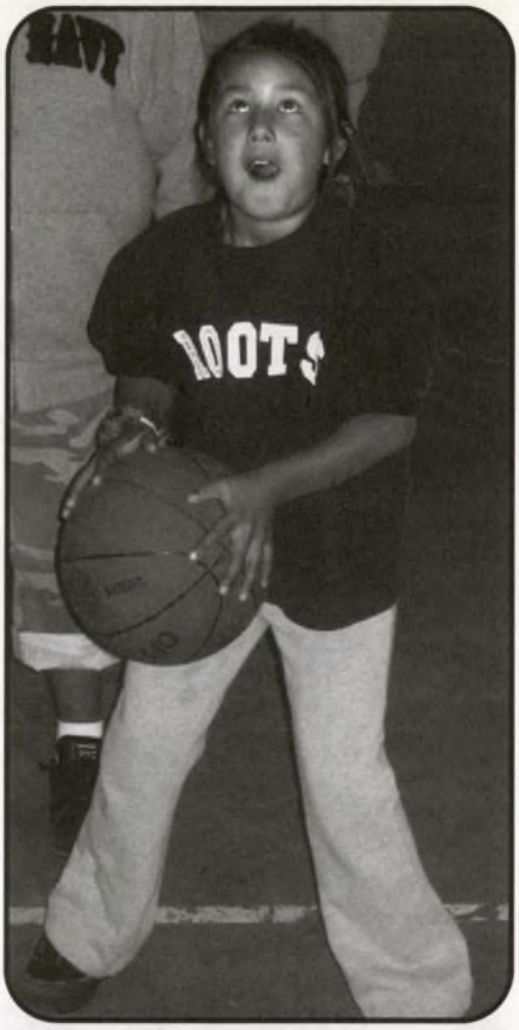
"I've learned that if you see new things, it makes you grow as a person. I was more than happy to try out something new and that helped me as a person."

"Hopefully they'll get a sense not to give up. That's what we're trying to instill in them. There's going to be trials and tribulations to go through. You'll have downfalls, but as long as you get up every time and work at it, you can achieve your goals."

The Read to Achieve Program is something Jones believes in whole-heartedly.

"It's gives them a chance to understand that they're not the





only ones reading. We're grown ups, we're in the NBA, but we can still pull out a book and read and have time to hang out with them. We try to show them that reading is fundamental."

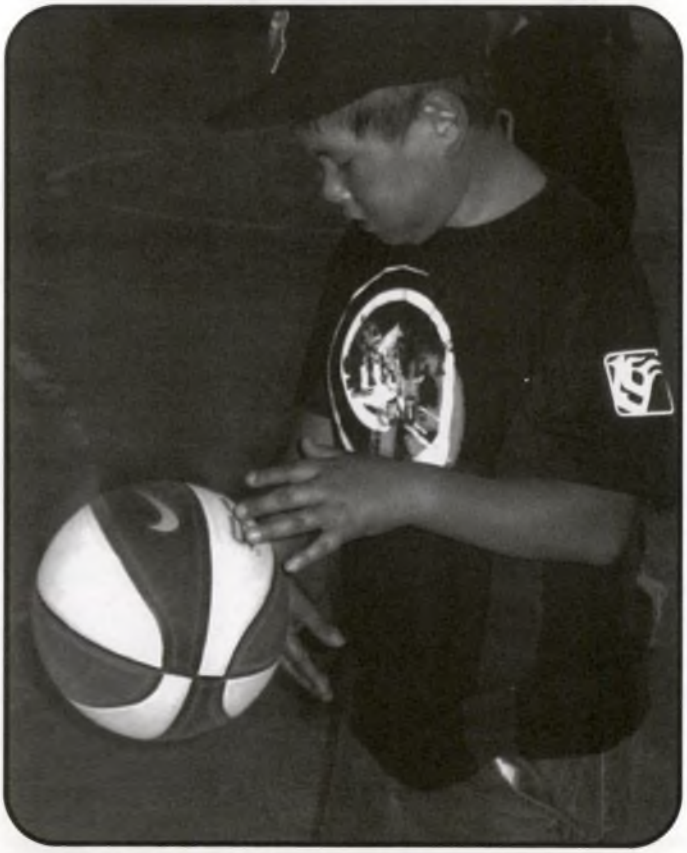
The camp saw 60 to 80 wide-eyed b-ballers come out to learn the basic skills required to play the sport. The stands were full of excited parents, cheering on their little ones.

The decision to visit Mistissini was an easy one, according to Sefu Bernard, Coordinator of Basketball Development for the Raptors.

"This visit is a very important extension of what we're doing from a community outreach perspective," he told *the Nation*. "Our mandate isn't to just stay in Toronto, it's to reach out and spread the game, but more importantly some positive values."

"It's a misconception that Toronto and Vancouver are the only basketball communities in the country. The game is alive and healthy in a lot of different regions so it's wonderful to see how warm the welcome has been."

"The underlying issues that surround symptoms such as drug and alcohol abuse and sexual and physical abuses are the issues of a sense of hopelessness"



The sport, as Hudson pointed out, sometimes takes a back seat to the more important Read to Achieve Program.

"Read to Achieve is something we do quite actively in any city we visit. It's a league-mandated program. Education and literacy is so important. It's something we rest our hats on in terms of promoting in different cities. This is the first time we've

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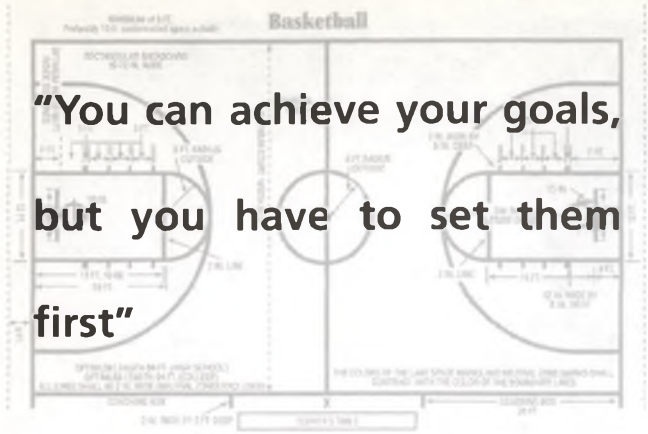


"You can achieve your goals, but you have to set them first"

Ashley Iserhoff and the Honorable James Bartleman

been up here and hopefully won't be the last."

Bernard was optimistic. The smiling faces and the athleticism of the kids made the trip an enjoyable and eye opening experience for himself and his players.

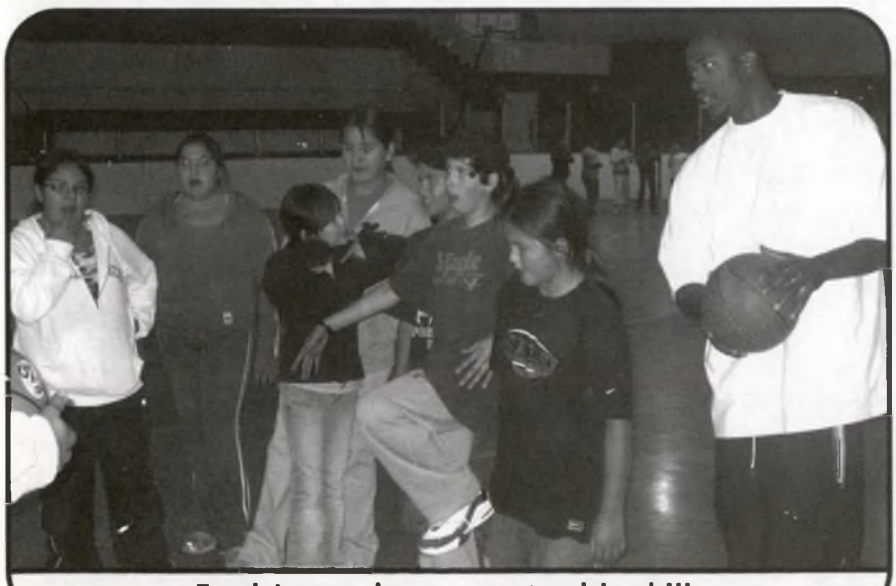
"The underlying issues that surround symptoms such as drug and alcohol abuse and sexual and physical abuses are the issues of a sense of hopelessness. The message that we've been trying to reinforce is that there is hope. Set dreams, whether they're athletic or personal or artistic, the underlying theme is the same. You can achieve your goals, but you have to set them first," said Bernard, who emphasized the learning experience for his players as well as the kids.

Hudson said that basketball, which he sees as the second most popular sport in Eeyou Istchee behind hockey, might be the catalyst for bigger and better things for Cree youth.

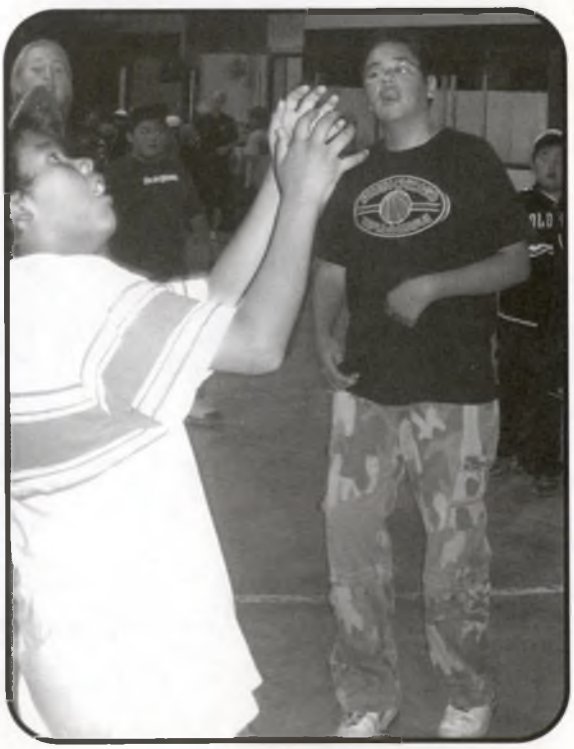
"I've got a young man here who is 17 years old and 6-foot-6 and if he applies himself, he has the ability to attend a division 1 or 2 school in the states and from there anything is possible. If Steve Nash at 6-foot-1 can make it, anyone can," said Hudson.

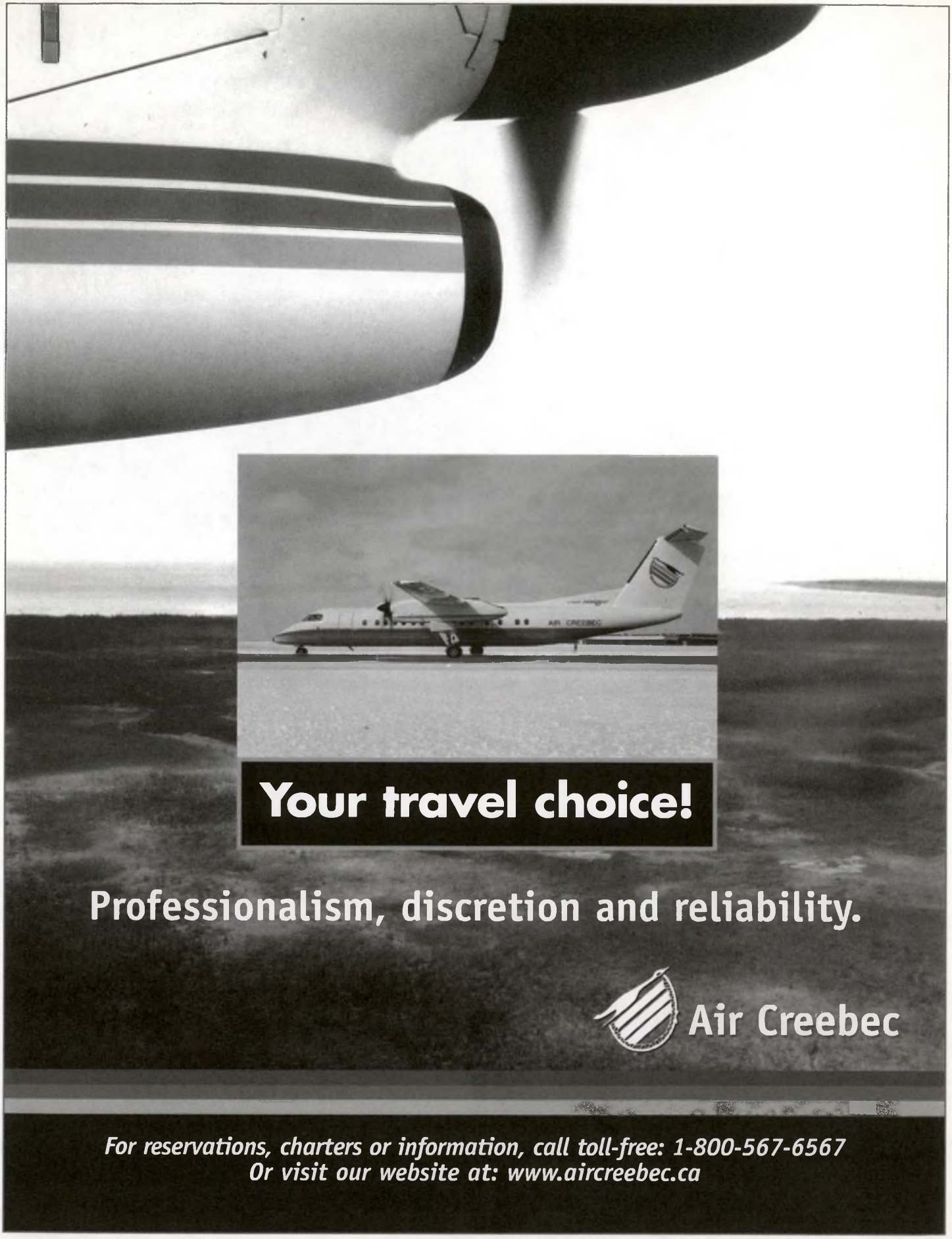
Steve Einish, 17, might be the one Hudson was talking about. With immense talent and a confident, brash style, Einish said he dunked on Fred Jones during the camp. When asked how Jones reacted, Einish smiled and replied "he cried." Sounds like he already has the attitude needed to succeed in the NBA, now all he needs is the motivation.

Raptors' Fred Jones



Fred Jones demonstrates his skills

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Myths and Truths about herbal and other alternative remedies

Health advice from the Cree Health Board

Health concerns us all in the Cree Nation, especially when you consider the diabetes epidemic in some communities. Other health issues affect people but it is difficult at times to understand the many diseases, causes, solutions or choices. This column is designed to assist but it will require your input if it is to be a regular feature in *the Nation*. ***You may send your questions via email to nation@beesum.ca or by post to The Nation, 5505 St. Laurent, Suite 3018, Montreal, Quebec, H2T 1S6.***

Most of the time, your questions will be forwarded to the Cree Board of Health and Social Services to be answered.

Everywhere we look, there seem to be advertisements for quick-fix, easy solutions to every problem. Some herbal remedies advertise fast and easy weight loss. Others promise instant relief or cure of long-term health problems. Vitamins claim to boost energy and enhance health. Are these products safe? Do they really work? Are they worth the money?

Natural medicines are medicine like any other and should be recommended by someone who understands the safe uses and dangers of these products. This includes Cree traditional healers who have received their knowledge and wisdom as a gift from their ancestors.

Myth: Herbs are natural and cannot hurt me.

Truth: Just because it is natural does not mean it is safe. There are many mushrooms and plants that grow naturally that are extremely deadly. Just think that if it has an action on the body, it can also cause harm if used unwisely (too much, for example). Also, many modern medications used today are derived directly from plants, so could be also considered "natural." Being "natural" does not mean it is better, it just means it comes from a plant or natural source. For example, digoxin

(lanoxin), a common medicine prescribed in the clinics for many Cree people with heart failure, comes from a plant.

Myth: If vitamins are good, taking lots of vitamins is better.

Truth: First, vitamin pills are no substitute for a healthy diet. Healthy food is the best source of vitamins, and also gives the body energy, protein, fiber and many other nutrients. Second, some vitamins (like vitamin A and vitamin D) are stored in fat. If you take too much of these vitamins, the extra vitamin does not get washed out of the body, and serious health problems can result.

Myth: There are no side effects from taking herbal remedies.

Truth: If a herbal remedy is strong enough to have a good effect on your body, it is likely also strong enough to cause some side effects in some people. This is as true for herbal remedies as it is true for prescribed medications. The list of known side effects is too long to be included here. Many herbal remedies have interactions with other medications, and you can also have an allergy to herbal remedies or the other ingredients mixed in with the products. Consult your physician, pharmacist or healer for further information.

Myth: The makers of "cure-all" herbal remedies and natural remedies sold over the internet, or by individuals in some of the communities, want to improve our health.

Truth: Like most businesses, many in the herbal and nutritional supplements business want to make money. Certainly many producers may have genuinely good intentions, but until

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new laws concerning herbal products come into full force in 2009, the products may not be tested for safety and benefit. Also, these remedies are sometimes very expensive! The individuals selling herbal remedies in the communities are usually not healers, and are selling the remedies because of the money they can make.

Myth: The herbal remedy sold on the internet or in the communities comes with statements by doctors and other people who say it works.

Truth: Unfortunately, you can not trust everything you read. On many of these products, the doctor or other people are paid money to help sell the herbal remedies. Ask your clinic nurse or doctor to help you understand the information available about the medicines or vitamins you are thinking of buying. (A good French information source is: www.passeportsante.net).

Other questions that have been asked:

Many people I know are buying a natural product sold in the community to treat their diabetes. Should I take it too?

Some of the natural products that are sold to treat diabetes are basically a very expensive mix of fruit juices. As you probably know, fruit juice (even if it is "all natural"), contains a lot of natural sugar. Using these products as a treatment for diabetes can be potentially dangerous if you stop using your proven diabetes treatments that are known to work (like healthy food, exercise and prescription diabetes medications). Checking your blood sugar and talking to someone at the clinic can you help you decide if these products are helping you or hurting you.

A friend has told me about some vitamins that can boost my energy. If I take these, can I stop taking the iron pills the doctor gave me for low blood iron?

Read the label carefully! Some of the vitamin supplements do not contain any iron at all! Others may contain doses that can cause problems if added on to your iron pills or other prescribed medicine (consult your physician or pharmacist for advice). Worse, some vitamin preparations contain very high doses of the kinds of vitamins that get stored in fat, and the "overdose" can cause health problems. Another thing to consider is that these products can often cost you $100 a month or more—that's over a thousand dollars a year! You are much better off spending some of this money on fruits, vegetables, healthy foods, or even a treadmill or fitness centre membership.

But I have heard of people getting side effects from prescription medications too!

This is true. Some medications do give some people side effects. The difference is that because prescription medications

are studied and regulated, doctors know what side effects are caused by the medications. Your doctor can then adjust this medication or your other medications, or even switch you to a different medication that is better for you and does not give you side effects.

If I use herbal remedies, what should I know?

If you are taking herbal remedies given to you by someone with knowledge and expertise in traditional or plant medicines, then it is important to tell your doctor or nurse what you are taking. Many herbal remedies interact with prescription medications. Always let him or her know whatever remedies you are taking – prescription, pills you buy without prescriptions or any herbal remedies.

How else can I improve my health?

Healthy living is more than just pills or supplements. It involves physical health and spiritual balance. Well-balanced diet, regular exercise, proper rest, sound faith, love and kindness all contribute to well-being.

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Will on the Grill

by Will Nicholls

It's been a while but I'm back cooking again. The next Will on the Grill will include some moose recipes as I know many people out there are currently hunting moose. Some might even be hunting deer as I understand they are more northerly than ever before. Don't forget to send me your favorite recipes for wild game.

Will's Musty Pork Roast

An easy recipe that tastes great. This roast will be so tender it will be unreal.

2 lb pork roast

4 cloves garlic

garlic chives

5 sprigs rosemary (2 teaspoons dry)

4 sprigs thyme (1.5 teaspoons dry)

2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon dry mustard

1 zucchini

1 onion

Slice zucchini in three and make a bed for the roast in a pan.

Peel and slice garlic into 1/ 8 inch pieces. Using a knife, cut holes into roast and insert garlic slices every two inches down the middle. On either side an inch or more make more holes and insert garlic slices.

Coat the top and sides of roast with Dijon mustard and put on the bed of zucchini. Sprinkle the dry mustard on top. Put the remaining garlic slices in top.

Lay the garlic chives, rosemary and thyme in an alternating pattern on the top.

Slice the onion into quarters and put at each corner of the pan.

Add a little water. You may put in some veggies if you wish such as potatoes, carrots, turnip, etc. in.

Cover with tinfoil and bake for 3-4 hours at 325 degrees. The length of time depends on the thickness and length of the roast.

Turkey and Sweet Potato Hash

Thanksgiving is coming up fast in the United States and sooner than you think for Canada. I'm always on the lookout for great things to do with leftovers. This one was recommended by a good friend.

large sweet potato, peeled and 1/4-inch diced

1 pound cooked turkey diced 1/2-inch or so

1 tablespoon butter

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 small red onion

1 red bell pepper

4 large eggs

1 tablespoon chopped, fresh chives (half if dried)

1 tablespoon chopped, fresh parsley (half if dried)

salt and pepper to taste

Place sweet potatoes in a saucepan; add enough water to cover by 1 inch. Bring to a boil and cook 3 to 4 minutes, until potatoes are just barely tender. Drain well and set aside.

Heat butter and 1 tablespoon oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Dice onion and red pepper, add to pan and cook about 4 to 5 minutes until lightly brown. Add sweet potatoes. Cook, stirring 6 to 7 minutes, until sweet potatoes are crispy.

Add remaining oil and turkey; season with salt (as always you can use salt substitute) and pepper and cook for 1 to 2 minutes.

Pat down, reduce heat to low, cover and cook another 4 to 5 minutes. Sprinkle with chives, parsley and additional salt and pepper if desired. Serve immediately.

Pizza Dough

This is an easy-to-make homemade version. The neat thing about it is that you can make individual pizzas for your fussy family. I've left out the pizza sauce and toppings as some of those have been covered before (the pita pizzas., etc.).

2 1/4 teaspoons active dry yeast

1 1/4 cups (275ml) warm water

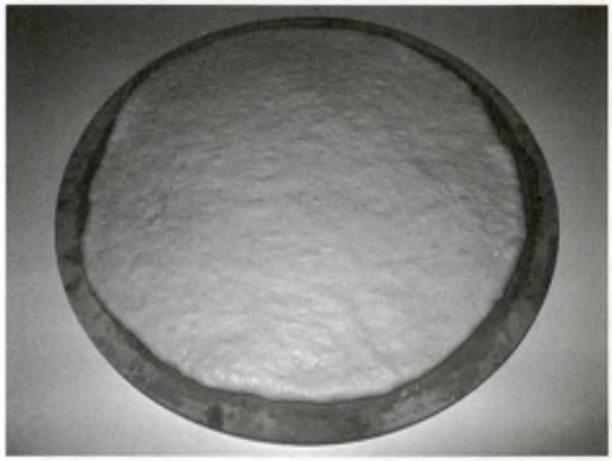
about 4 1/2 cups (500gm) plain flour

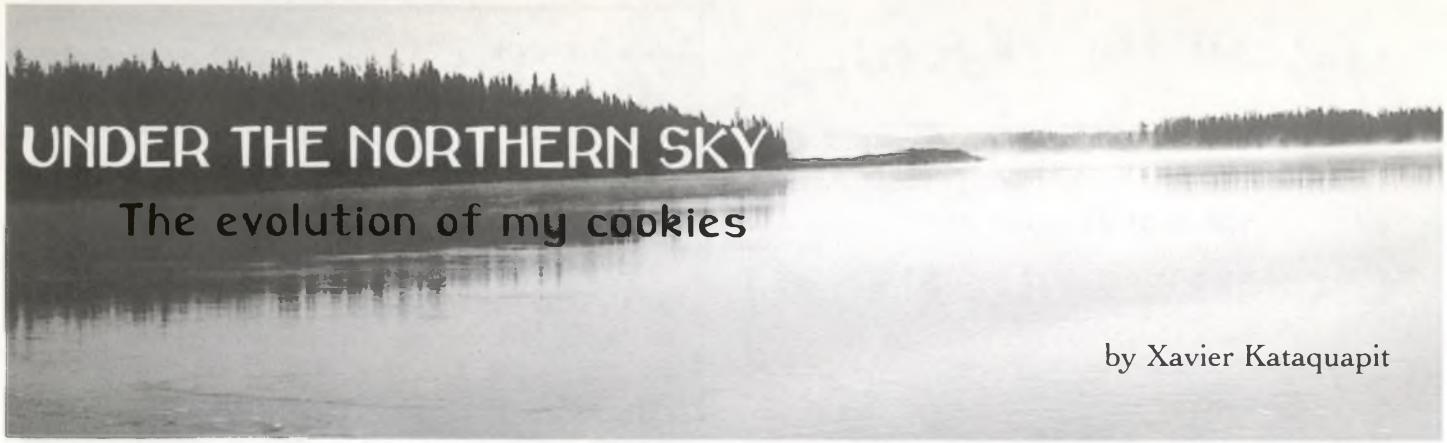
2 teaspoons salt

1/4 cup (75ml) olive oil plus extra for oiling the bowl and brushing

Stir the yeast into the warm water, cover and let stand for 15 minutes until foaming. Combine the flour and salt in a large bowl. Slowly add the yeast mixture and olive oil alternately, stirring after each addition. Turn the dough out on to a lightly floured work surface and knead for 8 minutes until the dough is soft and elastic. Place the dough in a big, lightly oiled bowl and leave to rise until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

Punch down the dough and divide into six balls. Flatten and shape them into circles, cover with plastic wrap and leave to rest for 5 minutes. Shape the circles again so they are 8 inch (20cm) in diameter. Brush with oil and grill for 2 to 3 minutes. Flip the dough over and add your pizza toppings on the cooked side. Brown the bottom of the dough.





UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

The evolution of my cookies

by Xavier Kataquapit

Cookies have always been a big deal to me. In southern non-Native communities, a treat like cookies is taken for granted as being a simple pleasure that anyone could enjoy at any time.

To us in the north, cookies were considered a very special treat that were hard to come by. Cookies were available but they were expensive. Most of the time my family was more concerned with just getting enough of the main staples to eat every day. Cookies were a big bonus. Mom knew how to make her own cookies but she rarely had the time to bake as she had to care for a family of 11. When she did bake a batch of cookies, her hard work would disappear in a matter of minutes as nine children greedily gobbled up the goodies.

Whenever mom could spare the money during her grocery shopping, she brought home a box of cookies. In our large family, that box of cookies never lasted long enough to be placed on the shelf for later use. We ate them up as soon as the box was opened. Early on none of us ever were too choosy about our cookies. We enjoyed chocolate, oatmeal, raisin, creamy centers or puff-balls.

I remember craving any kind of cookie. Mom comes from an extended family of people that she grew up with in the remote wilderness. We often visited with her aunts and uncles in the community. One special great-aunt we looked forward to visiting was an Elder we knew by her Cree name as Papi. She was a fun lady who enjoyed having a good laugh during a visit. We were always thrilled to visit Papi as we knew that she had an ongoing cache of cookies and candies.

She had grown up very poor on the land and these sweets had always been very precious to her. So even in modern times she still hoarded any sweets with great interest. Actually she did this in part so that there was plenty when any of the children came to visit her. We found it a bit strange to dip into a big plastic bag of mixed sweets like Oreo cookies, sticky hard candy, chocolates, jub-jubes, lollypops and licorice. At times all of these sweets more or less seemed to kind of jell together into one big glob of sugar. However, we didn't really care about the presentation, what we were after was the sugar. Papi was as sweet as her treats and we had lots of good laughs as she told us stories from her family life on the land.

Whenever we did have the opportunity to have cookies in our household it was usually one variety. They were the English biscuits. They were bland hard cookies with such name brands as Village cookies or Pilot cookies. We could buy large boxes of these treats and they actually lasted for some time in our house. These cookies were also great to take with us when we went out on to the land. These hard cookies were easy to pack, never took up much space and came in large quantities.

We normally never ate our hard biscuits right away. We ate these cookies with a cup of hot tea. We sat around the dinner table dipping our biscuits into the tea until they became soaked and then we ate them right away. I remember spending cold evenings huddled in our prospector tent while on a camping trip with our family. We sat around the camp stove with cups of hot tea in hand and a box of biscuits to share. It was also a pleasure to have some quick hot food like a tea-soaked biscuit while sitting in the middle of nowhere in a blind during the spring goose hunt. Life was much better out on the land in the cold when I had a thermos of tea and a small bag of Village cookies to give me a boost.

In recent years, I have discovered a variety of cookies. My friend Emily introduced me to Girl Guide cookies. As a long-time guider she still ends up with lots of these wonderful cookies. There are regular vanilla and chocolate flavours and also a chocolate covered mint cookie. Often, Emily will also bake her own oatmeal cookies and it is a real treat for me to have freshly made cookies with a cup of hot tea at the kitchen table.

I was happily surprised when I discovered other types of cookies such as the Italian biscotti. My friend Alana introduced me to these European treats. They are crispy baked cookies that are made with anise seeds, an ingredient that tastes like licorice and go perfect with a cup of freshly brewed coffee.

I have been lucky enough to sample cookies, pastries and sweet treats in many other countries. In countries such as Spain, France, Germany and Italy, they enjoy all kinds of fancy sweet treats with their coffee or tea. They have an almost endless variety of cookies, pastries and sweets to go with a fresh cup of coffee, cappuccino, espresso or tea.

Strangely enough these days I find myself craving those bland old Village and Pilot cookies. I guess it has to do with my memories of being out on the land. I have moved on too. These days I am forever dealing with a new kind of pesky cookie. Those cookies that infest my computer. There is nothing sweet about them.

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November 10	13-26	October 27
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December 8	14-02	November 24
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Feel like there's something the rest of the Cree Nation should know? Do you have any stories of corruption, discrimination, or something you want exposed?

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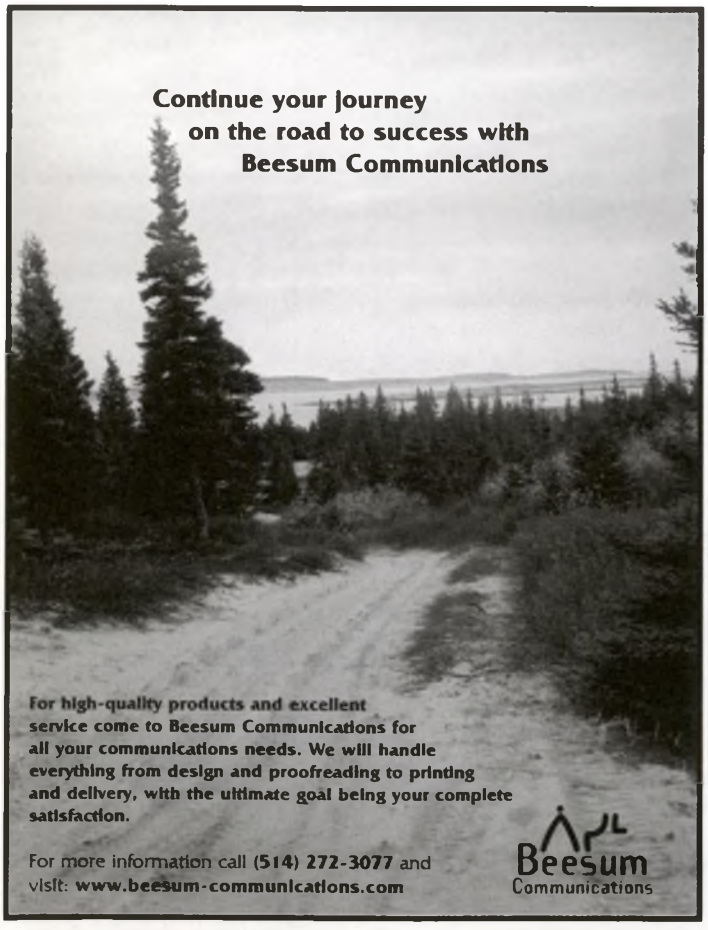
Call us at 514-272-3077, and we'll look into your story. We cannot guarantee anything will be written and we reserve the right to edit and leave out any libelous content, but if you don't call us, your voice won't be heard!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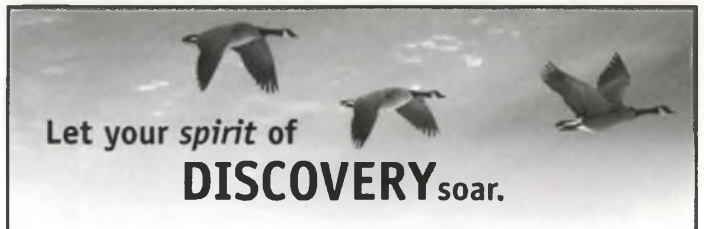

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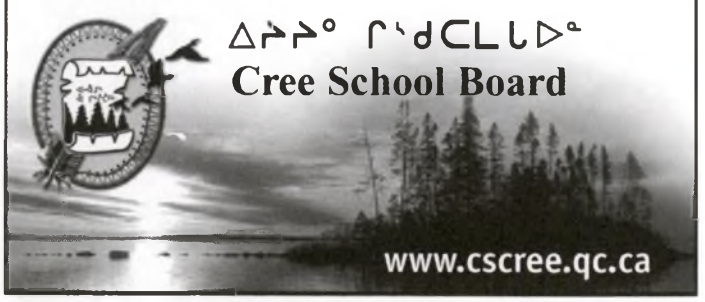

CLASSIFIEDS

BIRTHS -100

I would like to Congratulate my friend Agnes Napash on the birth of her baby girl born on September 3/06 in Montreal weighing 6lbs and 2oz. I welcome my God Daughter Alayna-Jade Bernadette Mary, I'll always be there for you baby girl! You take care of yourself my friend, and your little family! I Miss You and Remember to keep smiling... From Friend Always Catherine Washipabano.

BIRTHDAYS - 101

I want to take this time to wish a happy birthday to my big boy Marcus Jolly Whiskeychan who will celebrate his special day on october 19 2006.I still remember the day you were born @ 12;05 pm weighing in @ 10 lbs 3 0z.It was 5 years ago and it seems like yesterday.I'll make sure you'll have a great time on your day ok. And always know I will be here for you whenever you need me and your little sisters.And be a good boy in school.I will always love you and care for you my adorable son.With love always from your mom Bella and your little sisters Marisa and Mya and from your dad Mario

Happy birthday to the following people in september, I hope I remember eveyones birthday. Sept 1 Cynthia Cooper, Sept 2 Joex Mianscum..lol..Sept 3 Curtis Mianscum, Sept 9 my bro Marcus, happy sweet 16th guy..damn you're getting so big now..I still think you're only 12 or 13...lol...damn, I guess I don't wanna see you get older and move on, in my heart you're still the little 12 year old..lol..Jk..your growing up...I love that, I hope we get along in the future, no more fighting...u know what I mean by that.

Happy birthday to Tanya Blacksmith, haha ur getting old girl..lol..jk..luv ya ... there's still a couple more people in the month of September, my daddy on the 17th and my momma on the 20th. Hillary Icebound on the 20th also...September 22 me and Joni Cooper...saah, that's so many...on the 28th Winnie.T. Mianscum...if I forgot anyone...I'm so sorry, maybe you should remind me when your birthdays are, so I wouldn't leave anyone out...HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL OF YOU, I hope to see you guys very soon...love always: Hazel !

Birthday Wishes going out to someone very special my Aunt Bella Blacksmith on Sept.5.06 I wanna thank you for everything you've done for me,from your niece Joy-Lynn .I Luv u soooooo much.

Happy 19th Birthday to our son & brother Eugene Hughboy on September 30. & many more to come . We love you. From your mom & dad Sandra and Wyms and your brothers & sisters, Dale, Benjamin, Kerri-Ann and Bertha. p.s. hockey season is coming up soon, GO SLYFOXES #16! GO HUGE GO! lol ;)

We would like to congratulate our daughter Melanie Matches who graduated from Maquatua Eeyou School high school on September 1, 2006. Words can't express , how much you make us proud. We love you and we wish you the best of luck in your future. With lots of love from your parents, Mary & Eric Matches and family. P.S. We'd also like to say congratulations to the rest of the Class of 2006! Good luck & best wishes to you all. (Wemindji)

We would like to wish a Happy 40th Birthday to our mother, Jacqueline Masty on September 29. Happy Birthday and many more to come. We love you so much and always . Love always, Virgina, Jane and baby Poasie.

On October 9th, someone very special to me will be celebrating his 8th birthday and that person is my oldest Antonio Stephen. I wanna wish you a happy birhday and many more birhtdays to come and enjoy your special day with lots of love, Mom. (Wask)

Happy belated 3rd Birthday to my babygirl Viola Snowboy (Bouhla) On Sept 3 / 06. I love you my babygirl ,I wish you many birthdays to come, love Mommy Snowboy xoxoxoxoxoxo (Whap)

I would like to wish my twins Anthon and Anthony a happy 6th birthday on Oct 21 happy bithday to you both and many more birthdays to come and enjoy your special day, lots of love and kisses to you both when ever you need me I will be there . Once again I love you both very extra much love always. Mom, Antonio and your little bro Antonius Damian Kyle Estabon (Wask) love ya!

I would like to wish my cousin Roseane Blueboy a happy birthday on Sept 11 2006 happy birthday buddy from me (Danny Lablonde's ex girl friend) WASK

I would like to send out Birthday greetings to my one & only sister, Stephanie B Mianscum, who's in Kingston, On. Happy birthday sis, I hope you enjoy your day. I can't believe your ?? That's old already (but don't worry I won't write your age down) I hope everything works out right for you, both in school & life. Miss you guys so much. If only my date wasn't so close and all the appointments they give you before it's really time…I would definitely make a trip out to see you guys, & of course do some shopping…. Once again Happy Birthday and many more to come…love you all. From sis Vicky, Mitchell & Bart.

Birthday greetings to Jacey Leigh and Josie Anne Otter, their bithday was on Aug. 23 (Waswanipi). Wow! You girls must be tall now, we thought about you on your special day. We miss your smiles and laughter. We are sending you our love and prayers. Fr. All of us from Chisasibi…Diane, Alain, Steve, April, lil bro Keannon, Kevin, Desiree, Tracey & Jrsh. Also, William & Sarah Snowboy. Have fun and lots of kisses for both of you.

ANNIVERSARIES - 103

To my parents on their 61st Anniversary. When I think of all the things you do, the ways in which you care I'm filled with sense of gratitude and pride that is always there. I seldom take the time to tell you that I am happy you're my mom and dad. So, I will tell you now what's in my heart, You're the best I could have, I love you, and I miss you From your daughter Annie Sheshamush.

PERSONAL - 300

To my mon amour, the miracle you have given me is "LOVE" You have shown me to love again and feel. You have supported me in everything I have done & said. When I leave I am taking with me the feelings and love that I have felt for you. Also the memories that we have created together. The only thing that I am sad about is that I met you when I am leaving Quebec. You accepted me with all my bagage. May you not cry when I am gone or be sad in anyway. That is not how I want you to remember me by. When you drive past Chapais or Lac Cache smile & remember to great times we had there. Your Sweetwater(Babe)XOX

This is to all my friends in Ouje-Bougoumou. Francis Shecapio you have been a true friend by letting me stay @ your house. Wapachee (Grennon) women, Thank you for being like a family to me. Real Lacroix (my driver) & family Thank you for also being like family to me. To the Police Department Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work with some of your finest officers especially the women(we had fun). Now it is time that I go home to my family in North Bay. For the people who liked to gossip about me behind my back "MAY GOD FORGIVE YOU" For the rest I Thank you for telling me about what kind of gossip is going on about me. For all my friends that I have not told yet "I'M PREGNANT" & due on February 23/07. To make things clear "THE FATHER IS NOT FROM OUJE-BOUGOUMOU" He is a sperm donour from another community. THANK YOU OUJE-BOUGOUMOU FOR THE EXPERIENCE.

Public Service Announcements – 400

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal now has a 1-800 number. You can now reach us toll-free at: 1-866-403-4688. Please check out the new website at: www.nwsm.info and feel free to give us any feedback.

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